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ABSTRACT

One of a series of four reports on specific conservation themes, this report on fish and wildlife is intended to consolidate techniques which will best communicate the legislation, role, objectives, and practices of the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in enhancing habitats for fish and wildlife throughout the watersheds. Methods used by the Kortright Centre for Conservation to give visitors a better understanding of and appreciation for fish and wildlife; their use and their management as renewable natural resources are described. Key elements of a successful interpretive program are listed as positive messages, relevance, entertaining presentation, and active participation. Components used to develop the Fish and Wildlife Theme are detailed, including audio/visual presentations, indoor exhibits, outdoor demonstrations and exhibits, and sale of relevant publications and merchandise (i.e. wildlife art, bird feeder kits). The final section describes the Centre's programs at three levels: structured (for organized groups such as classes and special interest clubs), unstructured (for the public and groups with no specific program request), and passive (for groups using the Centre's facilities for meetings, but which may not have conservation as a primary interest). (CM/MH)

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FISH AND WILDLIFE THEME

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KORTRIGHT CENTRE FOR CONSERVATION

FISH AND WILDLIFE THEME

Allan Foster

for

T. E. Barber

THE METROPOLITAN TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

JANUARY, 1980

THE METROPOLITAN TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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1978.12.08

TO: Mr. Blair Dawson, Chairman and
Members of the Fish and Wildlife Steering Committee
Kortright Centre for Conservation.

The staff is pleased to submit this report on the Fish and Wildlife Theme at the Kortright Centre for Conservation.

The report has been prepared at the direction of the Kortright Centre for Conservation Exhibit Committee. The purpose is to consolidate the techniques that will best communicate the Fish and Wildlife Theme to the visitors. It is one of four reports detailing the Land, Water, Forest and Wildlife themes, respectively. The presentation of the themes is designed to reflect to the visitor the legislation, role and mandate, aims and objectives and practices of the Authority and of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Much progress has been made in developing some of the communication vehicles to be employed at the Kortright Centre, for example:

- several indoor exhibit preliminary designs have been developed and one prototypical exhibit completed;
- site plan of development of outdoor exhibits and demonstrations has been approved by the Authority;
- two slide shows, complete with sound, have been completed;
- two educational brochures relating to individual exhibits have been produced and are for sale;
- some merchandise related to specific exhibits has been developed and is for sale;
- some experimentation has been carried out by merchandising nutritious food especially related to individual exhibits;
- a number of approaches to interpretation have been applied to the three main categories of visitors (public, group, seminars and banquets).

These communication vehicles -- audio/visuals, indoor exhibits, conducted excursions, outdoor demonstrations and exhibits, sale of publications, merchandise and food, and programming all contribute to the development of the individual themes at the Kortright Centre for Conservation.

The visitor's understanding of the theme will be enhanced by a balanced use of all of these communication tools.

This approach to theme presentation is intended to guide the developments for the first two years of operation at the Kortright Centre. As experience is gained, changes will be required. Each theme should be reviewed carefully every three years, to assure the Authority that the Kortright Centre is communicating the up-to-date objectives of the Authority and the Ministry of Natural Resources to the visitor in a manner that will achieve the attendance targets.

T. E. Barber,
Administrator,
Information and Education Division.

TEB/mrp

I. PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION AND AUTHORITY POLICY

A Conservation Authority is established to ensure the wise management of renewable natural resources on a watershed basis.

> " the objectives of an authority are to establish and undertake, in the area over which it has jurisdiction, a program designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, coal, oil and minerals"
>
> - Section 19, The Conservation Authorities Act.

It is the goal of The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to undertake such a program based on the following premises:

- that the major non-renewable natural resources in the Metropolitan Region are the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Interlobate Moraine, the river valleys and the Lake Ontario shoreline;

- that the conservation, restoration, development and management of these natural resources requires an integrated, comprehensive watershed plan, which will guide development in the region in a way that recognizes...

    (1) the limitations of the resources to accommodate use and development;

    (2) the role of the region in accepting provincial growth objectives;

    (3) the safety from flood and erosion hazards in the community;

(4) the role of the resources in contributing to safe and healthful life in the community;

(5) the role of management of the resources to accommodate, without destroying them, the demands of urban and rural communities.

II. AUTHORITY POLICY -- OUTDOOR AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION

The policies of The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority with respect to planning, development and management of its lands and facilities for educational purposes are based on the following positions:

(1) The role of the Authority is to manage its lands and facilities in such a way that opportunities for outdoor and conservation education are made available (this role is only a part of the total effort public agencies involved in education and conservation want to make to meet the demand for outdoor learning);

(2) The Outdoor and Conservation Education Program is now funded as a separate development in the same way as is other Authority development;

(3) There are many outdoor and conservation education opportunities which occur directly as a result of the Authority's recreation, flood control, waterfront, historic sites and land-use programs. These can be extended effectively by designating some tracts of conservation land specifically for outdoor and conservation education purposes.

In carrying out its responsibilities for outdoor and conservation education, it will be the policy of the Authority to:

(1) include opportunities for learning as an integral part of its conservation programs and facilities;

(2) protect natural areas which are sensitive to use, and which have unique characteristics important for learning opportunities, through proper management practice (this may include use by regulation);

(3) manage all lands, facilities and programs designated for outdoor and conservation education purposes in a manner consistent with the objectives of the Authority, in order that participants can be assured of a continuing viable resource base;

(4) consider the lands, projects and facilities of The Authority as the principal resources of the educational programs, and to provide suitable facilities to accommodate educational users, including residential accommodation, day-use accommodation, interpretive displays and demonstrations, visitor orientation facilities, trails and facilities for study and research

(5) cooperate with other resource management agebcies and educational institutions in the provision of outdoor learning opportunities, where such use is compatible with the programs of the Authority and to enter into agreements to give effect thereto;

(6) cooperate with other resource management agencies and educational institutions in providing opportunities for study and research, where such activity is compatible with the objectives

of the Authority;

(7) carry out planning studies for determining the need to designate other tracts of land specifically for outdoor and conservation education purposes.

III. AUTHORITY POLICY -- FISH AND WILDLIFE

It is the objective of the Authority to enhance habitat for fish and wildlife throughout the watersheds, for the residents.

It is the policy of the Authority to:

(1) conserve and enhance habitat on Authority lands and waters used for agriculture, forestry, recreation and education;

(2) enhance fish and wildlife habitat on private lands in the watersheds through the Conservation Services Program;

(3) provide recreation opportunities for fishing and wildlife viewing and study in a natural setting;

(4) demonstrate sound fish and wildlife management to encourage same throughout the watersheds;

(5) manage fish and wildlife resources in a manner consistent with the policies and programs established by the Provincial Government, where these policies are appropriate to Authority lands;

(6) not allow hunting on conservation lands, due to intensive urbanization and local gun by-laws.

IV. AUTHORITY POLICY -- KORTRIGHT CENTRE FOR CONSERVATION

The Kortright Centre for Conservation is being established to demonstrate the concern of The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority for the renewable natural resources of the watershed. The Centre is being designed to provide visitors with the opportunity to observe, and wherever possible, to experience intimately the various aspects of people's involvement with the renewable natural resources of this part of Southern Ontario.

"People's involvement" includes the management, use and enjoyment of the Land, Water, Forests and Fish and Wildlife, to provide sustenance, prosperity and satisfaction for both urban and rural citizens of this region, in the past, the present and the future.

The Kortright Centre for Conservation relates the themes Land, Water, Forestry and Fish and Wildlife by focusing on natural and managed systems.

Management techniques and concerns will be compared from these three periods:

- the past
- contemporary
- the future

Emphasis will be on the contemporary and future practices and uses of renewable natural resources.

V. INTERPRETATION PHILOSOPHY

There are four key elements to a successful interpretive program. These are: positive messages, relevance, entertaining presentation and active participation.

All conservation messages will be presented in a positive manner.

It is important that both the language used and examples given be relevant to the visitor. Before a visitor can understand a new or complex principle, he must become familiar with the terminology. Interest will be generated if the message is practical and useful to the visitor.

The conservation message must be conveyed in an entertaining or enjoyable manner. A visitor can be exposed to new ideas, only if he is willing to listen to the message in the first place. A visitor will actively seek out new conservation information if this is a pleasurable and rewarding activity.

Involvement, especially the use of all five senses, creates the optimum learning situation. Visitors will be challenged to think about and react positively to the program.

VI. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES -- KORTRIGHT CENTRE FOR CONSERVATION -- FISH AND WILDLIFE

The Fish and Wildlife Theme requires the establishment of facilities and programs which will provide an opportunity for the visitor to achieve a better understanding of and appreciation for fish and wildlife, their use, and their management as renewable natural resources.

The Kortright Centre and surrounding area are the major frame of reference (80%) regarding the content of the interpretive program. The remaining 20% will illustrate other conservation activities of the Authority and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

It is the objective of the Fish and Wildlife Theme to:

- identify the fish and wildlife resources;
- indicate man's impact on these resources;
- demonstrate the wise use and management of these resources;
- indicate man's dependence on fish and wildlife and their uses;
- explain the role of private and government agencies, especially that of the Authority and the Ministry of Natural Resources, in the wise management of the resources;
- draw attention to the interrelationships between fish and wildlife and other resources;
- encourage sound fish and wildlife management on private lands throughout the watershed;
- encourage citizen support for sound fish and wildlife management programs.

Priorities within the overall theme

Exhibit demonstration and facility priorities have been established on the basis of:

- their importance to the overall development of the theme;
- the amount contributed to the overall development of the theme;
- the ability to stand alone;
- the ability to eventually fit into the entire theme storyline;
- the degree of visitor interest;
- cost.

VII. COMPONENTS OF THE FISH AND WILDLIFE THEME

The following components contribute to the development of the Fish and Wildlife Theme:

(1) Audio/Visual Presentations

(2) Indoor Exhibits

(3) Conducted Excursions

(4) Outdoor Demonstrations and Exhibits

(5) Sales of Publications, Merchandise and Food

(1) Audio/Visual Presentation Component: These presentations of ten to twenty minute duration, will be used for visitor orientation to the Fish and Wildlife Theme, or to a specific aspect of wildlife conservation. The presentations, viewed in the main theatre, will allow the staff to contact visitors, to assemble groups for other activities, to generate interest in the theme and to establish a good rapport. Visitors will be able to view particular audio/visual materials by special request on a small group or individual basis.

The following automated slide presentations, produced at Kortright, will be used:

- WETLAND CONSERVATION: Identifies resources of a cat-tail marsh and stresses the need for preservation of this habitat.

- INTRODUCTION TO MARSH WILDLIFE: Light hearted introduction to Kortright marsh.

- WETLANDS, WILDLIFE AND YOU: Introduction to the importance of wetlands to urban dwellers.

- A SAMPLER OF FISH MANAGEMENT: Fish management including Lamprey control.

- STREAM IMPROVEMENTS FOR TROUT: Outlines steps taken to reclaim streams for Trout management.

- COMMERCIAL FISHING (A CHANGING RESOURCE): Identifies the importance of commercial fisheries in the Great Lakes and the evolution taking place within the industry.

- SPLAKE: Fish management show outlining how a fish was artificially produced to meet the new stresses in the Great Lakes.

- CONSERVATION OFFICERS: An introduction to the role of the Conservation Officer in fish and wildlife management.

- DEER MANAGEMENT: An introduction to the sound management practices used today in maintaining deer populations.

- WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN ONTARIO: An introduction to fish and wildlife management concepts.

- WILDLIFE RESEARCH IN ONTARIO: An introduction to the research programs presently conducted in Ontario.

- URBAN WILDLIFE: An introduction to urban wildlife management techniques.

- SPORTS FISHING IN WESTERN LAKE ONTARIO: Identifies the fisheries resources available to Toronto residents.

- Conservation Services Program Publications

In addition to the slide shows, commercially produced films will be used. Among those given consideration are:

- LIFE IN THE WOOLDLOT: This shows the ecological relationship between plants, animals and man -- National Film Board.

- TROUT STREAM: Ecology and life cycle of the Brook Trout -- National Film Board.

- WORLD IN A MARSH: Ecological study of a marsh -- National Film Board.

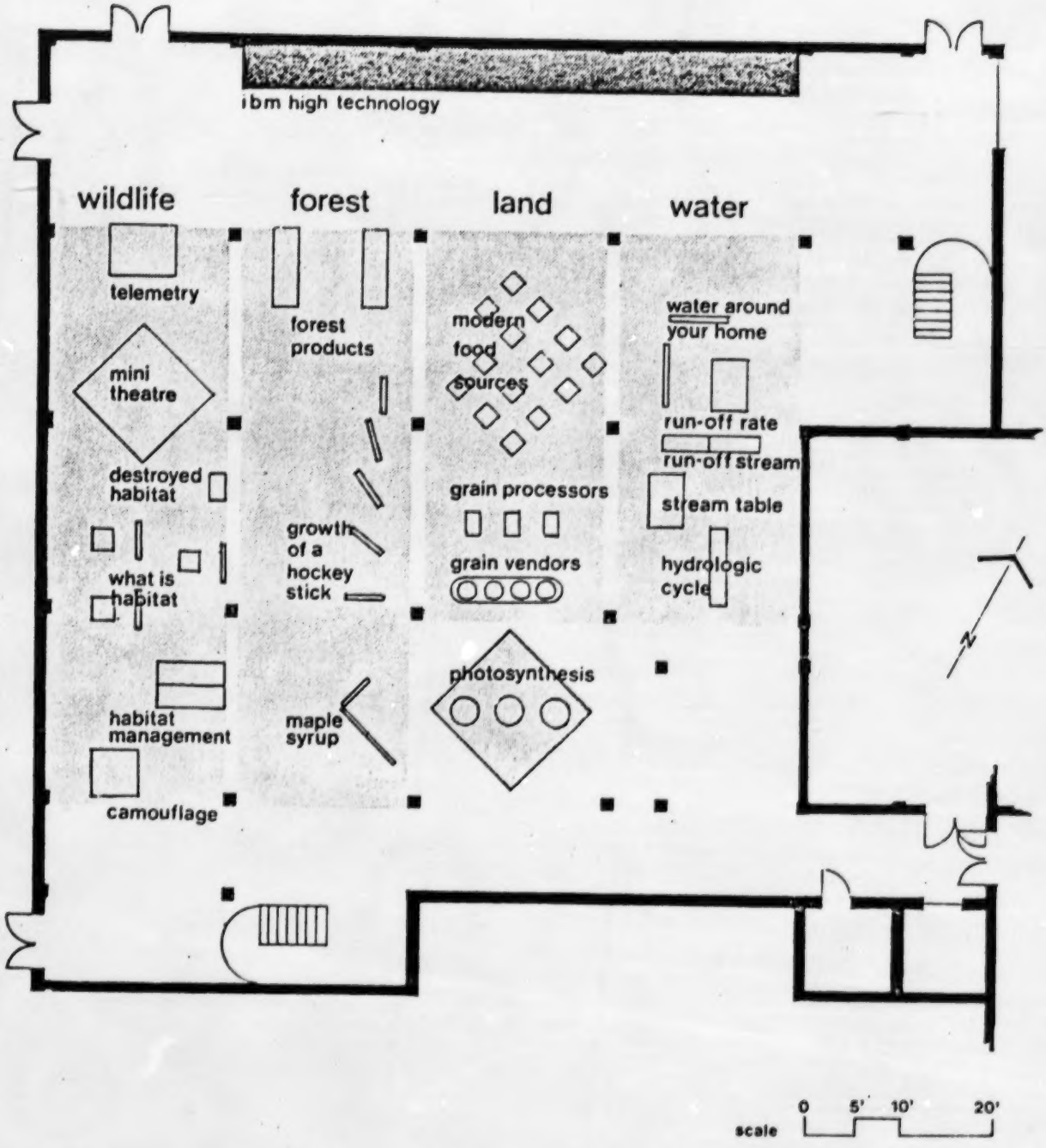
(2) Indoor Exhibit Component: The exhibits in the Visitors Centre will function to generate interest in the Fish and Wildlife Theme, as well as give fundamental information about the fish and wildlife resources and their management. When complete, the exhibits will form a coherent and complete story. Indoor exhibits will compliment resources or demonstrations found outside. When a message is best stated outdoors, that is where the visitor will be exposed to it. The indoor exhibit component is designed to hold the visitor's attention for an hour or less. The indoor exhibit component will act as a holding area where visitors may be actively involved until the next scheduled event.

The following three indoor exhibits will be completed:

(a) Habitat is the Key to Fish and Wildlife Survival:

(i) What is habitat?

A pictorial question and answer game console will identify water, shelter and space as major components of habitat.



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Indoor Exhibits

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What is habitat?

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Indoor Exhibit: Habitat is the key.

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This exhibit will enable the visitor to compare and contrast habitat requirements of several wildlife species and man.

(ii) How Can You Improve Wildlife Habitat?

Photographic panels and game boards will describe wildlife habitat management practices and will identify habitat as the most important factor to wildlife survival. Correct answers are provided in pictorial form and interest will be increased by providing a numerical score for the quiz.

(iii) What Happens to Wildlife when its Habitat is Destroyed?

This small, simple, but high impact exhibit will dispell the myth that wildlife simply moves to other areas when habitat is destroyed.

(b) Wildlife Mini Theatre:

A series of 2-minute audio/visual presentations will feature local fish and wildlife resources and their management. Each show will be a complete information package, dealing with one issue. They will be arranged so that a longer, and more detailed presentation is provided for visitors who want to watch the whole series.

(c) Wildlife Research and Radio Telemetry:

A pictorial console will identify the need for wildlife research in Ontario and describe the types of research now taking place. Radio telemetry, remote sensing and other modern techniques will be featured. Visitors will be encouraged to locate a radio-collared raccoon on the property.

(d) Balcony Viewing Facilities:

Viewing scopes and parabolic microphones mounted on the balcony will encourage visitors to participate in the outdoor programs.

(e) Temporary Exhibits:

Occasionally, temporary exhibits will enhance programs of a seasonal or topical nature.

(i) Birds in the Wood:

A series of bird carvings, with a pictorial panel back-drop, will show the evolution of decoy carvings as hunting aids and recently as an art form.

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Indoor Exhibit: Radio Telemetry

The Kortright Centre for Conservation Wildlife

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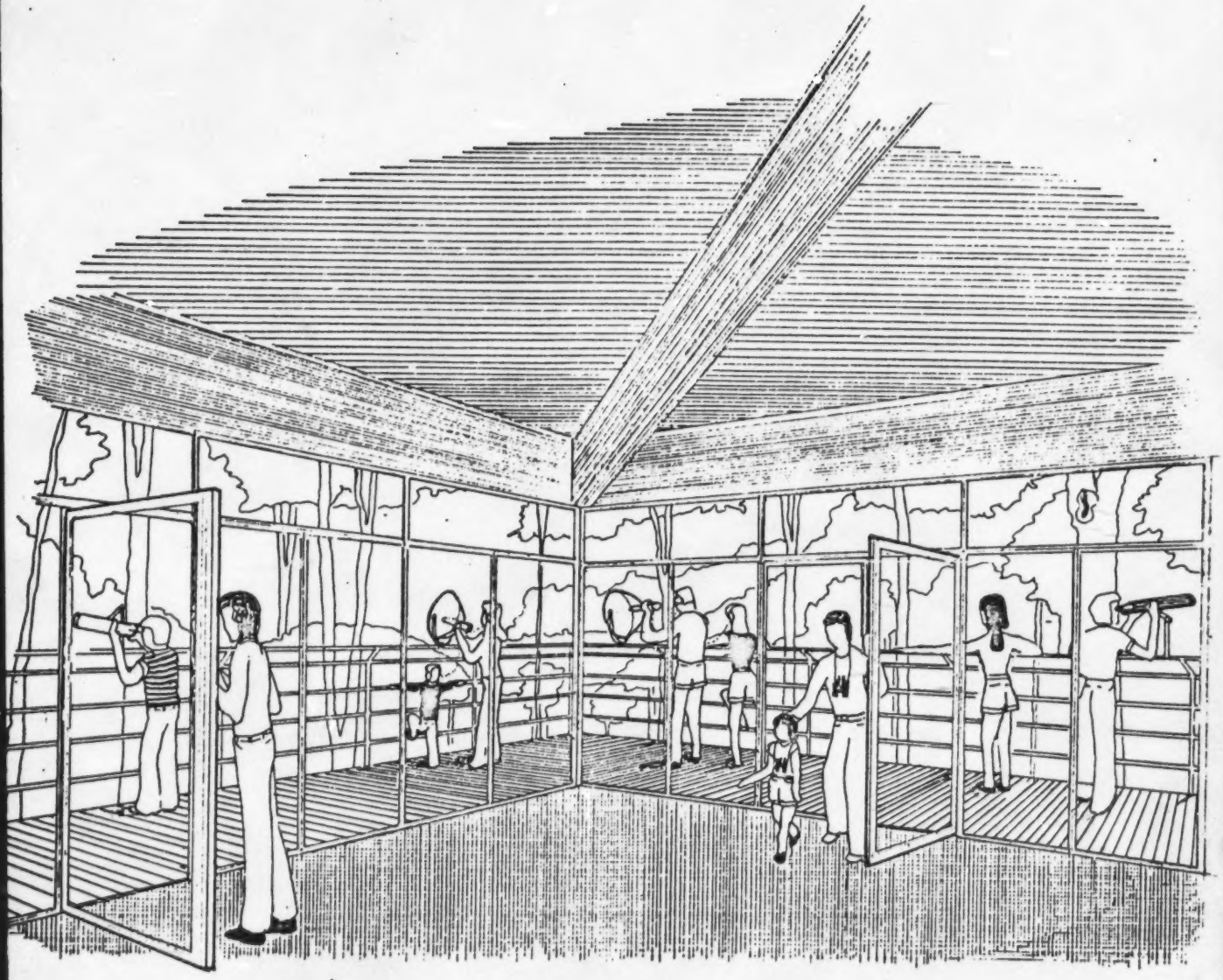

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Indoor Exhibit: Balcony Viewing

The Kortright Centre for Conservation Wildlife

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3. Conducted Excursion Component

One of the greatest assets of the Kortright Centre is the trail system that winds through one hundred and sixty hectares of diverse wildlife habitat.

Excursions identifying fish and wildlife resources, their management and ecological implications, will radiate out from the Visitors Centre. These will take place after orientation, as staff led or self-guided walks. Trail guide booklets will be available.

Three major topic areas have been identified for the conducted excursions:

(a) Southern Trail Loop: This 1.5 km trail provides an excellent opportunity to explore a wide range of natural successional wildlife habitats and the wildlife associated with each. The Fish and Wildlife Theme could be related to man's use of the land, past and present, to productivity of the various habitats and to conservation principles.

(b) Northern Trail Loop: This 2 km trail provides an excellent range of wildlife habitats, both managed and natural. Featured along this route are examples of intensive habitat management practices, shrub row plantings, urban lots, and annual food plantings.

(c) Western Trail Loop: This 1.5 km trail crosses Cold Creek and follows the Humber River to a 15 ha. artificially created marsh. This trail provides opportunities to identify wildlife resources and wildlife management practices as they relate to aquatic and semi-aquatic environments.

4. Outdoor Demonstration and Exhibit Component

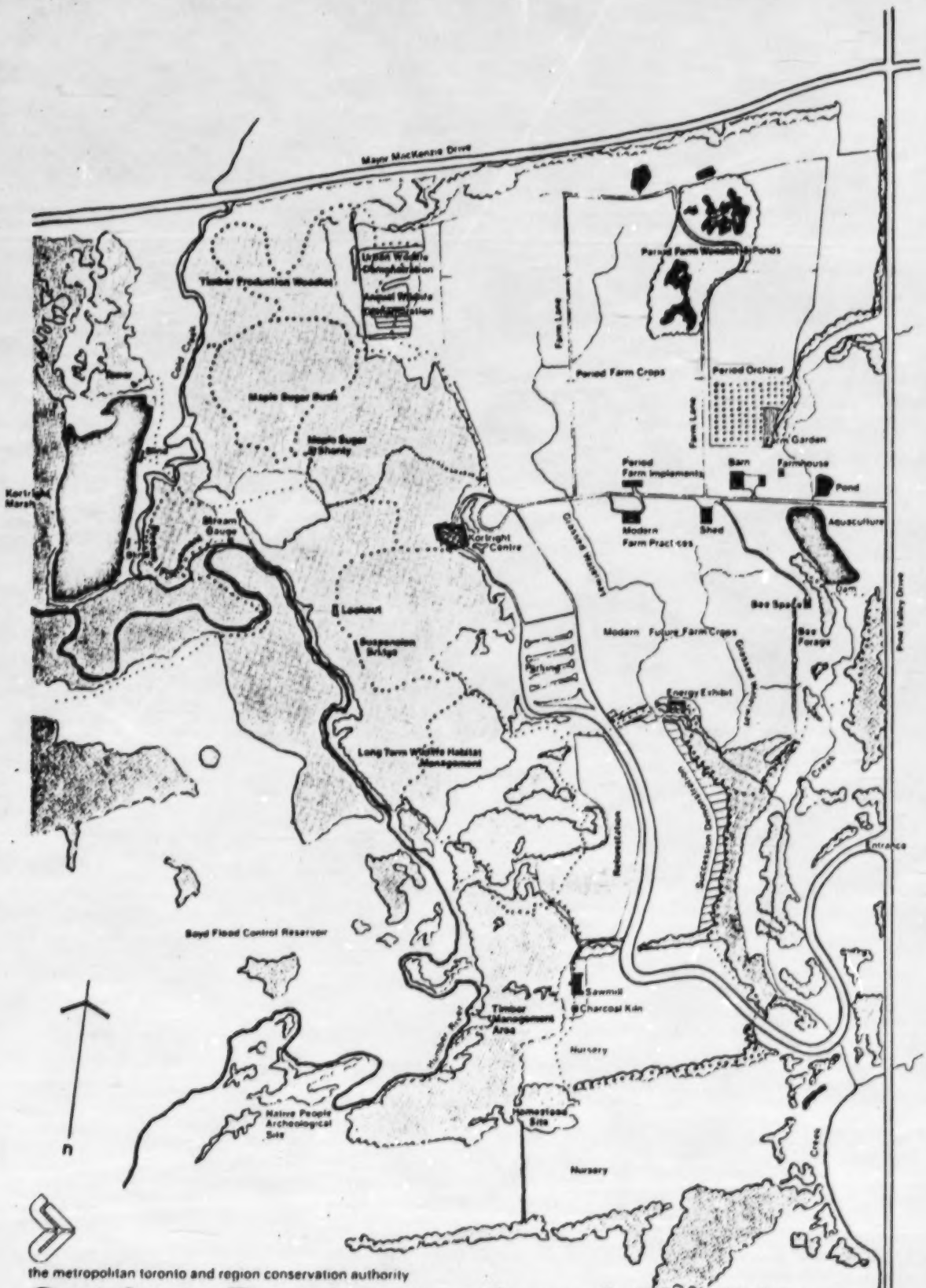
Fish and wildlife management techniques, as practiced by the Authority and the Ministry of Natural Resources, will be featured. Visitors will evaluate these practices for application on their own property. On site demonstrations include:

- managed woodlots
- annual food plantings
- urban landscaping for wildlife
- wildlife hedgerow plantings
- bird nest box demonstration
- waterfowl habitat creation demonstration
- stream improvement demonstration

(a) Managed Woodlots: Two hectares of a mature beech/maple woodlot will be managed for timber and wildlife production. This area will be used to demonstrate management practices and to show the beneficial effects of judicious cutting.

Visitors will be able to see the results of recent cutting operations -- i.e., the "release" of seedlings which provide a wildlife food source; the creation of ground cover through the construction of brush piles using slash; and the maintenance of vigorous forest edge growth.

(b) Annual Food Plantings: Two hectares of land are presently maintained to provide an annual crop of seeds and plant material to be used by wildlife. The merits of a variety of food plants can be compared for aesthetic purposes and effectiveness in attracting wildlife.



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Outdoor Demonstrations & Exhibits

The Kortright Centre for Conservation

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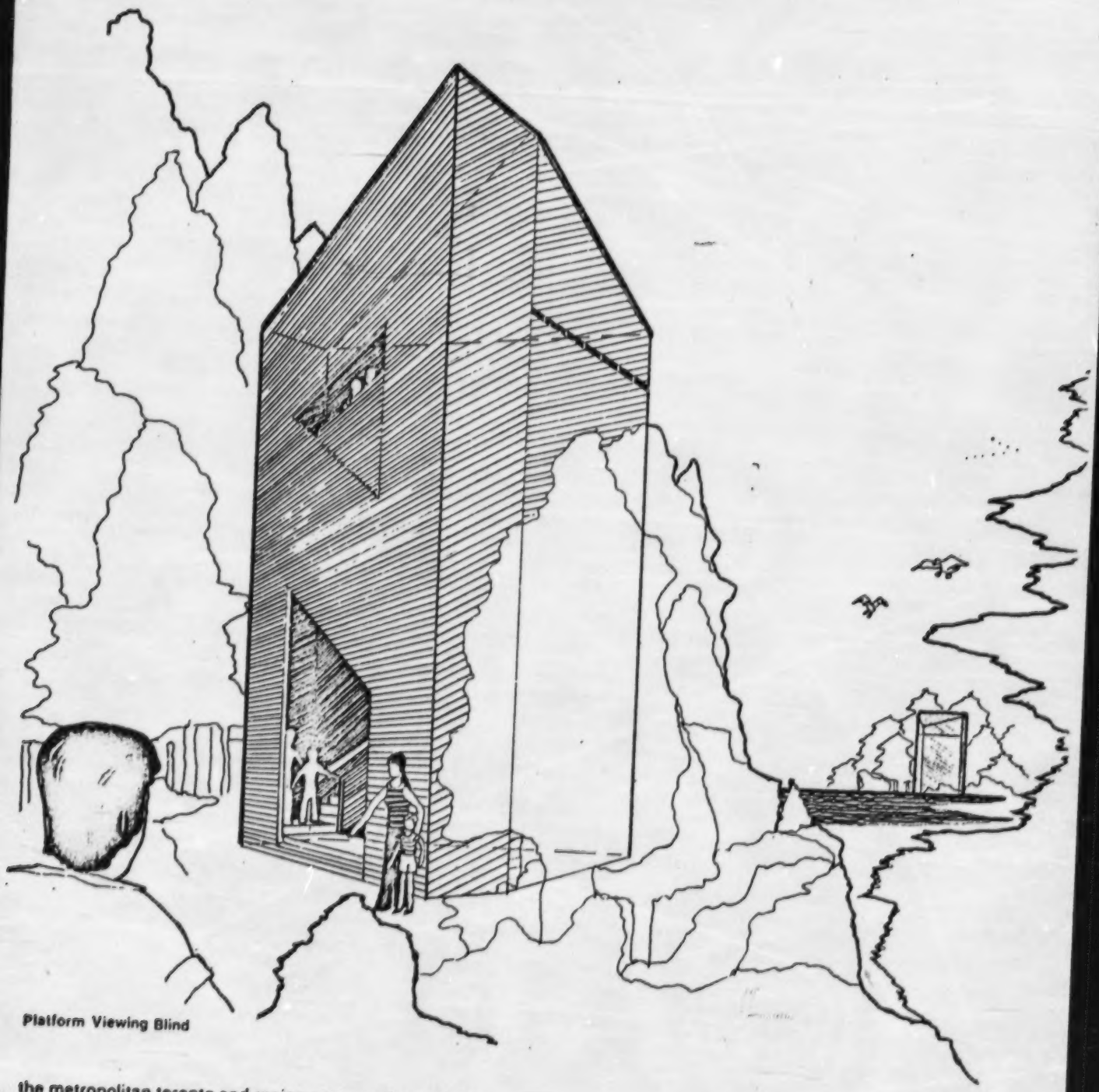

Platform Viewing Blind

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Outdoor Demonstration: Kortright Marsh

The Kortright Centre for Conservation Wildlife

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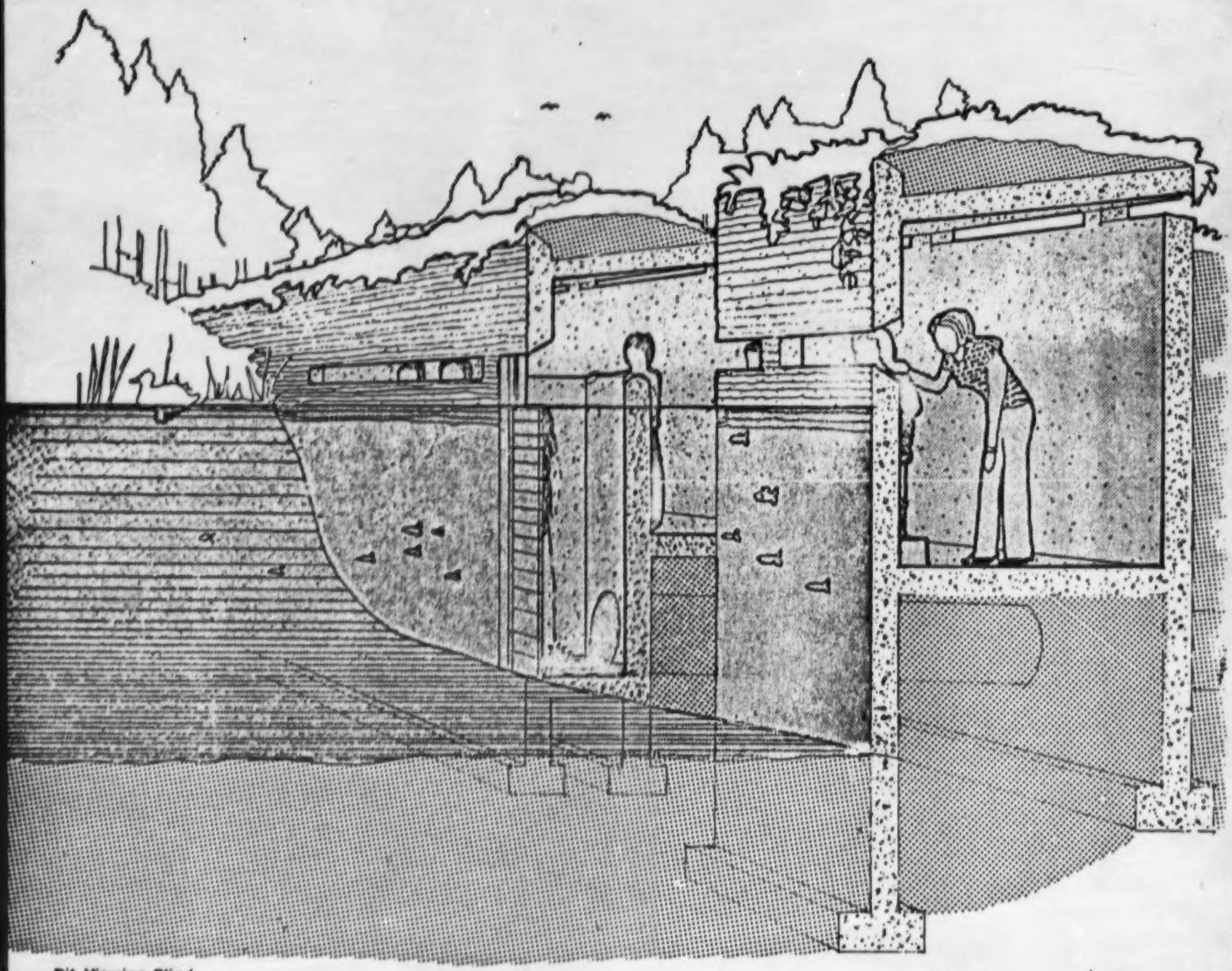

Pit Viewing Blind

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Outdoor Demonstration: Kortright Marsh

The Kortright Centre for Conservation Wildlife

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(c) Urban Landscaping for Wildlife: Six model backyards are landscaped on a one hectare plot to resemble typical properties found in urban areas. All the trees and shrubs used are valuable to wildlife as excellent sources of food and/or cover. Visitors are encouraged to apply some of the ideas on their own property.

(d) Wildlife Hedgerow Plantings: Three kilometres of hedgerow shrubs were planted on the property in 1963, during a research project to evaluate various planting techniques and the effectiveness of the shrubs in attracting wildlife. An additional two kilometres of shrub rows were planted in 1978.

(e) Bird Nest Box Demonstration: To demonstrate the use of nest boxes in attracting birds, two hundred of them have been set up.

(f) Waterfowl Habitat Demonstration: The construction of a water impounding berm in 1978 has resulted in a three hectare pond. Natural generation of aquatic plants will create prime waterfowl habitat. Three viewing structures will be constructed. With the aid of various interpretive media, visitors are instructed on the creation of a pond and the resulting benefits.

(g) Stream Improvement Demonstration: Within the Kortright property, the Cold Creek meanders 1.5 kilometres, before joining a three kilometre stretch of the Humber River. Conservation Service Programs will be identified and these streams will be managed to produce examples of optimum fish and wildlife habitat and to demonstrate proper watershed management.

5. Sales Component

Articles will be sold to develop the visitor's interest in fish and wildlife conservation and encourage participation in conservation practices and contribute to the revenue of the Centre.

Publications

Two types of publications will be sold. Those that relate directly to the site include:

- Wildlife Trail Guide to the Northern Trail Loop
- Wildlife Trail Guide to the Southern Trail Loop
- Wildlife Trail Guide to the Western Trail Loop
- Wildlife Checklist for the Boyd Conservation Education Complex
- Guide to Wildlife Shrub and Tree Plantings
- Guide to Urban Landscaping Demonstration
- Kortright Wildlife Colouring Book

The second type of publication sold will contain more general resource information:

- Peterson's Field Guide to the Identification of Birds -- Hougthon Mifflin Co.
- Peterson's Field Guide to the Identification of Mammals -- Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Peterson's Field Guide to the Insects -- Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Fowl and Loathsome Creatures: A small booklet identifying the herptiles of Southern Ontario. Stresses the need for herptile conservation -- Canadian Wildlife Service.

- Wolves and Coyotes in Ontario:
Describes the ecology, the life history and the status of these two animals. Ministry of Natural Resources.

- Beaver in Ontario: Describes the life history and status of the beaver. Ministry of Natural Resources.

- Ruffed Grouse in Ontario: Describes the ecology, life history and status of ruffed grouse. Ministry of Natural Resources.

- White tailed Deer in Ontario: Describes the ecology, life history and status of white tailed deer. Ministry of Natural Resources.

- Turtles in Ontario: Describes the ecology, life histories and status of turtles in Ontario. Ministry of Natural Resources.

- Snakes in Ontario: Describes the ecology, life histories and status of snakes. Ministry of Natural Resources.

- Backyard Habitat: Describes the importance of urban landscaping for attracting wildlife. Ministry of Natural Resources.

- Wildlife Land Management for Ontario Landowners:
Describes various management techniques for landowners to encourage wildlife.
Ministry of Natural Resources.

- Waterfowl Identification Guide: Illustrated fold-out describing the ecology and distribution of Canadian species of waterfowl. Ducks Unlimited.

- Conservation Services Program Publication.

Merchandise

The following items relate to fish and wildlife resources and will be offered for sale:

- wildlife artwork -- paintings and drawings
  -- photographs
  -- sculptures
  -- calendars
  -- hasty notes
- kits for bird boxes and feeders
- special bird seed
- seedling treesand shrubs
- seeds for wildlife plants
- film
- slide sets

Food

Wherever practical, the food served during special events will relate to the Fish and Wildlife Theme.

VIII. PROGRAMMING

There are three types of visitor groups expected at Kortright. Consequently, there will be three levels of programming:

(1) Structured

(2) Unstructured

(3) Passive

(1) Structured

This type of program is designed for organized groups such as school classes, guide/scout troops, or special interest clubs. The group will contact the Kortright Centre in advance and request a specific theme program of special interest. Each group will be sent a pre-program information package containing confirmation of the reservation, basic background material relating to the requested program, and a list of suggested readings.

Each group will be met in the Visitors Centre. A guide will be provided for each twenty-five persons. The theatre introduction to the theme will be followed by a viewing of the indoor exhibits, pertaining to the theme. All theme tours will involve an excursion to an outdoor demonstration, led by an Authority staff member. The group will then return to the Visitors Centre to shop at the store or eat at the snack bar.
Structured group visits may be booked Monday through Saturday.

(2) Unstructured

This type of program is designed for the public and organized groups without a

specific program request. Organized groups can make reservations and will be sent confirmation to that effect. Otherwise, initial contact will be made at the information desk by a receptionist.

The receptionist will outline the program for the day. The visitor will be invited to view the periodic audio/visual introductions or explore the indoor exhibits. Guided excursions on the interpretive trails will begin at regular intervals. Visitors will also be able to follow their own way, using a guide map of the related exhibits, the outdoor demonstrations.
Skilled demonstrators will be on hand to answer questions. Visitors will be encouraged to participate in the demonstration whenever possible.

The Centre will be open to the general public every Sunday.

The Authority will invite outside groups to Kortright and will sponsor special events that promote the wildlife conservation theme.
These events could be held anywhere on the property and will be used to encourage visitation at times other than peak periods.

It is envisioned that any or all of the following events could be conducted at Kortright to promote the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Theme:

- Bird Watching
- Bird Banding
- Botanizing
- Bird Nest Box Building Workshop
- Hunter Safety Seminars, in conjunction with the present Cold Creek program

- Fly Fishing and Fly Tying Demonstration and Contest

- Wildlife Photography Exhibits and Contests

- Wildlife Painting Exhibits and Contests

- Wildlife Sculpture Exhibits and Contests

- Boy Scout, Girl Guide, School Groups, etc. Conservation Projects

- Wildlife Conservation Workshops and Seminars

- Professional Development Days for teachers or other groups
- Conservation Award Presentations

- Conservation Private Land Assistance Programs

(3) Passive

The Visitors Centre provides excellent facilities for seminars, meetings and banquets from Monday through Saturday. Many groups wishing to book the Centre may not have conservation as their primary interest. These groups should be encouraged when regular programs are not fully booked. These occasions provide the Authority with an unique opportunity to communicate its message to people who might not ordinarily come to a regular program. The following list of possible events is a progression which corresponds to the degree of input by Authority staff:

(1) Welcome to the Kortright Centre;

(2) Viewing the exhibits in the holding area;

(3) Introduction to the Kortright Centre Program;

(4) Introduction to The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation;

(5) Audio/Visual Presentation:

- passive presentation
- 20 years in review
- Theme presentation

(6) Balcony, Bird Feeder, Weather Station Visit -- a short sample of an interpretive program;

(7) Noon hour or after dinner excursions on an interpretive trail;

(8) Food service and sale of merchandise. These activities will contribute to the visitor's understanding of conservation.